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MEDICAL SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTES
LINKED TO PUBLIC HEALTH ADVANCEMENT

Ye. I Smirnov, Minister of Public Health USSR, reported the following at a meeting of directors of Medical Institutes and Deputy Minister of Public Health:

Our public-health services have expanded in the past 2 years, and have responded to every decree and order of the State. However, we must not be lulled into a false feeling of security. We must keep in mind the important tasks before us, both at present and in the future.

Continued maintenance of the health of the peoples of the USSR requires introduction of new techniques into the public-health service organizations. The work of former Soviet scientists aided our public health service to develop along the practical line of thought and today many of our scientists in every Republic and oblast of the country are engrossed in working out actual problems toward the maintenance of public health. It is necessary to mention the significance of the work of such scientists as N. N. Burdenko, S. I. Spasokhotskiy, G. M. Mukhadze, A. V. Rakhmanov, I. P. Resanov, A. V. Savinykh, A. I. Buzanov, and M. B. Topchibaev, among others.

Our therapeutic and prophylactic, scientific-research, and medical institute network has increased far beyond the pre-Revolutionary level. From 1937 to 1942, 88,000 new young doctors and specialists graduated from these educational institutions.

World events have done much to contribute to the advance of our medical service. The reorganization after the Revolution helped to overcome many of the defects which were inherent in the public health service during the Tsarist period. After World War II it was possible to ferret out various erroneous conceptions regarding the treatment and diagnosis of cancer, pulmonary tuberculosis, endocarditis, pneumonia, and several other diseases. These findings should govern our actions in the forthcoming reorganization of the Public Health Service of the USSR.

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The Party and State must be impressed by the necessity for improving the service of medical enterprises. Some programs have already been put into effect; in 1947 about half of the rural medical enterprises did not have doctors on their staffs; but now the majority of these rural medical enterprises have doctors, and very shortly every rural medical station will likewise have a doctor on its staff. Many rural community hospitals have from five to ten physicians, many of whom are specialists.

Health data for 1948 attests to the benefits gained by proper use of available equipment and facilities and advantageous use of new techniques. The death rate due to erroneous diagnoses fell considerably. Some inefficiency has resulted due to the fact that frequently people are uncertain as to the specific duties of the clinic, the hospital combined with a polyclinic, and the dispensary. This point has been corrected by a comprehensive education program and it is already possible to note a decided improvement in the over-all health service available to rural populations.

The many successes of the public-health service are due in a large measure to the standing army of some 200,000 medical workers and the ever-present potential of the many thousands of students and inexperienced medical workers.

It is the duty of the many scientists, teachers, and instructors to aid in the development of the public health service. They can do this only if they keep in mind the requirements of the public-health service and plan instruction in the light of present and future needs of USSR public health.

The various medical schools must be in close touch with the practical needs of public-health enterprises. A recent survey in 20 large cities disclosed the fact that in most cases the scientific research institutes did not take as active a part as they might in various pressing problems of community hygiene and sanitation and the general welfare and health of the population.

It can be seen time and time again, that the only way to attain the objectives of the Stalin Five-Year Plan is to establish comprehensive plans for cooperation between theoretical educational training and the actual problems which will face physicians and doctors after graduation. However, there is much to be desired in that direction. For example, the Azerbaydzhan Institute for the Improvement of Doctors is oblivious to its duties. Many of the so-called specialists who graduate never practice their specialties. It must also be noted that the training is poor indeed when the instructors are noted for making erroneous diagnoses. This statement is based on reports from the Odessa Clinic, the Second Saratov Hospital, the L'vor Hospital, the Kuybyshev Hospital, the Ivanovo Hospital, and many others where mortality from pneumonia and appendicitis were unnecessarily high.

The Ministry of Public Health USSR is counting on the active participation of the personnel of educational institutions to solve many public-health problems. Such a program would at the same time provide students with an appreciation of the problems they will have to face in life and will serve to guide them to paths where their productivity will serve the best interests of the USSR.

After Smirnov's speech, the delegates engaged in a heated discussion. I. I. Kal'chenko, director of the Kiev Institute for the Improvement of Doctors stated that for the past 3 years there has been a comprehensive program in which every member of the staff at the Institute had to have a thorough understanding of the problems of the various regions in the oblast. Thus, studies have been conducted along a line which would be best suited for meeting the public-health program in every corner of the oblast. Kal'chenko claimed that such a program has resulted in giving the peoples of the Ukrainian Oblast one of the best public-health services in the USSR.

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D. A. Zhdanov, director of the Leningrad Sanitation Hygienic Medical Institute, was in complete accord with Smirnov. He stressed the fact that it was impossible to graduate competent doctors if the educators were ignorant of the needs of public-health services and stated that the cooperation program at the institute is operating well: 7 professors, 12 docents, and some 26 assistants are on duty at various polyclinics in the therapeutic and prophylactic network. A special board has been set up to study the nature of diseases in one of the regions around Leningrad, with the objective of obtaining experienced doctors to cope with the situation.

D. V. Mysh, director of the Irkutsk Medical Institute, also agreed with Smirnov's ideas, but stressed the importance of cooperation between practicing doctors and the institutes. In 1948 the Institute trained 100 doctors. The members of the staff delivered a total of 400 lectures in neighboring communities, and they are in constant contact with rural doctors and various public-health agencies. It is urged that the Ministry of Public Health USSR publish a decree requiring practicing doctors and specialists to maintain close contact with educational institutions.

V. P. Lebedev, director of the Central Institute for the Improvement of Doctors, criticized the stand taken by the Academy of Medical Sciences USSR, which apparently forbids its staff members to engage simultaneously in scientific and pedagogical work. He also urged that public-health organizations compile some concrete data on diseases and morbidity rates in their areas.

V. S. Serebrennikov, director of the Sverdlovsk Medical Institute, stressed the importance of close cooperation between educational institutions and public-health organizations.

S. P. Khodkevich, director of the Tomsk Medical Institute described the various steps taken at the Institute which improved operations and effectiveness so that it won the Stalin Prize. The best results were obtained by having practicing physicians lecture to the students.

S. I. Voronikhin, director of the Izhev Medical Institute, claimed that the network of unified prophylactic and therapeutic enterprises are an excellent means for obtaining highly qualified medical personnel.

P. P. Sumbayev, director of the Molotov Medical Institute, criticized educational institutions, that did not cooperate with municipal and local public-health organizations. One of the most pressing problems is the shortage of competent specialists. Much of the fault can be traced to the fact that public-health agencies are unable to utilize specialists to the best advantage. It was admitted that the performance of specialists in Molotov Oblast must be improved.

B. D. Petrov, director of the First Moscow Medical Institute, stressed the necessity for narrowing the gap between the state of scientific knowledge and the practical work of doctors. He also criticized the fact that public-health agencies frequently fail to take full advantage of the abilities of competent specialists. There is poor liaison between the Main Administration for Higher Medical Educational Institutions, the Ministry of Public Health USSR, and the First Moscow Medical Institute.

Yu. A. Mendeleva, director of the Leningrad Pediatrics Medical Institute, was very critical of the operation of the municipal Public Health Department, which has evidenced extreme unwillingness to cooperate with local educational agencies.

P. L. Shupik, chief, Administration for Higher Medical Educational Institutions, Ministry of Public Health Ukrainian SSR, urges that courses for the improvement of doctors be given at medical schools, and that the institutes for the improvement of doctors should cooperate with oblast hospitals in graduating specialists.

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Z. K. Mogilevchik, director of the Minsk Medical Institute, agreed that the operation of the Institute was far below desired levels, but that with recent changes its operation has been improved considerably. All the instructors are famous not only for their pedagogical ability but also for their practical scientific ability.

S. K. Nechepayev, director of the Khabarovsk Medical Institute, states that much of the difficulty in the Far East is due to the fact that young doctors are sent out only once every 2-3 years. The Institute requires the wholehearted cooperation of the Ministry of Public Health in its program for better performance of the educational facilities.

Ya. Kh. Turakulov, director of the Tashkent Medical Institute, noted that professors as well as assistants frequently shirked their duties. There is much absenteeism. Even the Ministry of Public Health for the Republic has to operate the greater part of the time with its chief absent.

G. A. Vyaselev, director of the Kazan' Medical Institute, decried the fact that scientific collaborators at the Institute were not utilized properly.

I. M. Popovyan, director of the Saratov Medical Institute, complained bitterly about the lack of cooperation evidenced by local public-health agencies. Instead of facilitating the addition of more specialists to the ranks of medical personnel of the oblast, the oblast public-health department constantly draws on the doctors assigned to educational institutions, thus greatly hampering education of future doctors and specialists. He urged that the educational institutions be freed from complete domination by the Public Health Administration but did not suggest any concrete plan.

D. Ye. Potekhin, director of the Kazan' Institute for the Improvement of Doctors, criticized the fact that the Ministry of Public Health USSR is underestimating the value of the work done by the Institute.

D. Ya. Shkhratsabaya, chief of the Administration for Higher Medical Schools, Ministry of Public Health RSFSR, stated that qualified specialists are not being utilized properly. He objected to the practice whereby professors and educators are forced to attend all sorts of conferences. He urges that educators be freed from any duty which works at cross purposes with main duty -- that of turning out qualified doctors.

Others who commented on the general state of affairs were V. S. Levit, Moscow; K. K. Akhunbayer, Frunze; S. Yu. Alikekov, Makhachkala; V. F. Shirokiy, Stalingrad; and K. Ya. Faradzheva, Badu.

Smirnov's closing remark was that he hoped that all of the 300 scientific research institutes and medical schools would see their duty clearly and that with the cooperation of the various public-health organizations it would be possible to raise the standard of medical care to the level called for in Stalin's decrees.

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